

Message Text

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PAGE 01 AMMAN 02168 020754Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 2168

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (MCGOVERN, GEORGE)

SUBJECT: SENATOR MCGOVERN IN JORDAN

REF: A) AMMAN 2127 B) AMMAN 2128

1. SUMMARY: SENATOR MCGOVERN SPENT ACTIVE DAY AND AHALF IN JORDAN, WHICH INCLUDED SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH KING HUSSEIN, CROWN PRINCE HASSAN, AND PRIME MINISTER RIFAI. SENATOR ALSO TOURED UNRWA REFUGEE CAMP AND MET WITH GROUP OF PROFESSORS FROM JORDAN UNIVERSITY. SENATOR'S VISIT RECEIVED WIDE AND SYMPATHETIC COVERAGE IN NEWS MEDIA, WITH MUCH ATTENTION BEING GIVEN TO COINCIDENCE OF VISIT WITH AMERICAN "REASSESSMENT" OF MIDDLE EAST POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. SENATOR MCGOVERN AND AIDES TILLMAN AND BARON ARRIVED IN AMMAN BY CAR FROM BEIRUT, VIA DAMASCUS, EVENING MARCH 29, STOPPING TO TOUR ROMAN RUINS OF JARASH ON WAY. HEAVY SCHEDULE MARCH 30 BEGAN WITH HOUR AND HALF MEETING WITH CROWN PRINCE HASSAN, ATTENDED BY AMBASSADOR. HASSAN CONCENTRATED ON HIS HOPES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF JORDAN, NOTING THAT WHILE IN PAST THERE HAD BEEN HEAVY STRESS ON SERVICES, NOW JORDAN WAS MOVING TOWARD A MORE PRODUCTION-ORIENTED PHASE IN
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PAGE 02 AMMAN 02168 020754Z

ITS DEVELOPMENT WORK. HASSAN SUGGESTED THAT JORDAN

VALLEY AND ITS SOUTHERN EXTENSION WOULD BE CRUCIAL AREA FOR FUTURE. PALESTINIAN REFUGEES AND THEIR INTEGRATION INTO JORDANIAN ECONOMY WERE ALSO DISCUSSED, WITH CROWN PRINCE ADDING DETAILS ON HIS OWN THINKING ABOUT DIFFICULT EFFECTS ON WEST BANK OF ITS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO ISRAELI ECONOMY. HASSAN THEN TURNED TO US ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS AND JORDAN, EXPRESSING HOPE THAT US WOULD BE ABLE TO INCREASE FUNDING IT DEVOTES TO JORDANIAN DEVELOPMENT. SENATOR THOUGHT THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WOULD BE VERY SYMPATHETIC TO INCREASED HELP IN THIS AREA AND ASKED CP TO PROVIDE HIM WITH MEMORANDUM ON SUBJECT. HASSAN AGREED TO DO THIS AND TO DISCUSS HOW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE RELATED TO SOME OF POLITICAL FACTORS IN JORDAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO MIDDLE EAST AND US.

3. CODEL NEXT VISITED UNRWA-RUN MARKA CAMP FOR 1967 PALESTINIAN REFUGEES; TOUR CONDUCTED BY JORDAN UNRWA DIRECTOR JOHN TANNER AND GOJ REPS. SENATOR RESPONDED TO SPEECHES OF REFUGEES CRITICAL OF US POLICY BY MENTIONING IMPORTANCE OF PALESTINIANS IN SOLUTION OF MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, SENATOR'S REMARKS APPEARED IN LOCAL PRESS NEXT DAY IN EDITORIAL PRAISING SENATOR FOR STATING THAT "ALL THE STATES OF THE WORLD MUST RECONSIDER THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ORDER FOR JUSTICE TO BE REALIZED." SIGNIFICANT EDITORIAL COVERAGE WAS SYMPTOMATIC OF INTENSE INTEREST OF JORDANIANS IN MEANING OF ANY POSSIBLE "REASSESSMENT" BY US OF MIDDLE EAST POLICY; OFTEN DURING HIS STAY, SENATOR WAS OBLIGED TO DENY THAT HE HAD COME TO MIDDLE EAST WITH ANY SPECIAL "PLAN" FOR SOLVING PROBLEM.

4. CODEL AND AMBASSADOR HAD LENGTHY MEETING WITH KING HUSSEIN AND ALSO WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI ON WIDE RANGE OF MIDDLE EASTERN ISSUES. (DETAILED ACCOUNT OF CONVERSATIONS IN REFTELS.)

5. LATE AFTERNOON, CODEL MET WITH GROUP OF JORDAN UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR (MOSTLY PALESTINIAN) AT UNIVERSITY CLUB FOR WIDE-RANGING EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.
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PAGE 03 AMMAN 02168 020754Z

PREDOMINANT THEMES DURING HOUR-AND-QUARTER SESSION WAS JORDANIAN PROFESSORIAL INCREDULITY THAT US SHOULD SUPPORT ISRAEL "AGAINST AMERICA'S INTERESTS", AND INDIGNATION AT CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS SPECIFICALLY EARMARKED FOR RESETTLEMENT IN ISRAEL OF SOVIET JEWS. SENATOR RESPONDED WITH REMARKS OUTLINING EXPLORATORY NATURE OF HIS TRIP, AND NOTING ALSO THAT ANY SETTLEMENT OF ISSUES OF AREA, PARTICULARLY TERRITORIAL, REQUIRED

COMPROMISE RATHER THAN ALL-OR-NOTHING ATTITUDE EXPRESSED BY SOME OF HIS INTERLOCUTORS. PROFESSORS ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SUBSTANCE OF SENATOR'S CONVERSATION IN BEIRUT WITH YASIR ARAFAT, AND MOST WERE IMPRESSED BY FRANKNESS OF SENATOR'S ACCOUNT OF MEETING. BY ALL ACCOUNT OF MEETING.

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, UNIVERSITY PARTICIPANTS FOUND SESSION EXPREMELY PROFITABLE.

6. EVENING MARCH 30, CODEL TALKED WITH LARGE GROUP OF PROMINENT JORDANIANS, INCLUDING CROWN PRINCE HASSAN AT DINNER AT RESIDENCE HOSTED BY AMBASSADOR AND MRS. PICKERING. CODEL RETURNED DAMASCUS MORNING MARCH 31.

7. AS MENTIONED, CODEL VISIT RECEIVED LAVISH AND LAUDATORY MEDIA COVERAGE. JORDANIANS HAVE PROVEN EXTREMELY RECEPTIVE TO CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS, AND SENATOR APPEARS TO HAVE STRUCK RIGHT TONE WITH THEM, PARTICULARLY DURING CURRENT INTEREST IN POSSIBLE US RE-EXAMINATION OF MIDDEL EAST POLICY. WHILE SENATOR CONSISTENTLY DECLINED TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO SPECIFIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OR SPECULATION CONCERNING POSSIBLE COURSE OF US "REASSESSMENT", HE DID IN PRIVATE REMARKS SUGGEST TO JORDANIANS THAT HE FORESAW NECESSITY OF ISRAEL'S EVENTUALLY RETURNING TO 1967 BOUDARIES, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF SOME KIND OF PALESTINIAN ENTITY (INDEPENDENT OR FEDERATED WITH JORDAN).

8. OCDEL SCHEDULED TRANSIT JORDAN BY CAR ENROUTE TO WEST BANK APRIL 2. TRANSIT WILL GIVE CODEL OPPORTUNITY TO SEE AT FIRST HAND A GOOD PART OF JORDAN VALLEY AND EAST GHOR CANAL PROJECT.
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